



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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May 26, 2008

City Celebrates Change

FORWARD OPERATING BASE

KALSU — After nearly three months of reconstruction, Sayafiyah residents celebrated the simultaneous openings of the Sayafiyah Governance Center, Veterinary Clinic and Health Clinic on May 20.

"This is their day," said Capt. Joe Johnson, commander of Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

All three of the projects were a result of teamwork between Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and the civilian population.

"They are great people down here who want to help themselves," said Sgt. Jeremy Johnson, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-187th Inf. Regt. "They put a lot of hard work into this," he said, pointing to the restored health center. "Before, it was just rubble."

Like the buildings, the community itself had been in dire straits. Once a safe haven for al-Qaida in Iraq, the community was

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A young Sayafiyah boy holds up an Iraqi flag, demonstrating pride in his country. Citizens of Sayafiyah celebrated the openings of the Sayafiyah Governance Center, Veterinary Clinic and Health Clinic on May 20. Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky.

This Week in News ...

From 'Ambush Alley' to Peaceful Ally

Coalition Forces Provide Aid



Press Conference: Operational Update from Baghdad

Reconstruction Report: The latest from USACE

Hot Item: See Footage from MNF-I on Our YouTube Channel

Caches Pouring in to Coalition

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU — Amnesty drop off points are not a new idea in the Army. Whether coming off a range, field exercise or going through customs returning home from deployment, such drop off points give Soldiers a chance to discreetly dispose of contraband and avoid repercussions.

Now, in the Maderiyah area, 25 kilometers south of Baghdad, the same privileges are being offered to citizens.

"The biggest fear a lot of these people have is getting arrested," said 1st Lt. Greg Highstrom, platoon leader for 2nd Platoon,

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Iraqi Army Soldiers and Soldiers with 3rd Platoon, Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT), travel together through fields during a clearance operation. U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Christopher McKenna.

Op Ends, Projects Continue

CAMP STRIKER — Operation Marne Piledriver kicked off in earnest April 15 with an Iraqi Army-led air assault and clearing operations in the Mahmudiyah area, about 26 kilometers south of Baghdad. Although the IA has led air assaults in the past, this particular mission showcased its abilities.

“This ... showed that Iraqis are securing the area, ridding it of the last bastion of [al-Qaeda in Iraq] and simultaneously injected projects, both US- and Iraqi-funded, such as clean water, agricultural and other business opportunities and [aimed] to grow the trust in Iraqi Security Forces,” said Col. Dominic Caraccilo, commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Piledriver is the first major opera-

tion initiated by Task Force Marne that targeted capacity building throughout the Mahmudiyah Qada. From refurbishing schools, clinics and water treatment facilities to rejuvenating the poultry and fish industries, the operation has yielded several projects to improve quality of life for Iraqis on many fronts.

“I think [the Iraqis have] benefited a lot, and I think they’re only seeing the beginning of the benefits,” said Vince Valle, team leader for the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team. “The idea is to help them get some self-sustaining projects that will generate economic activity and possibly ... generate jobs. We are seeing that already, and we’ll see that a lot more as

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Upcoming U.S. Iraq Rotations Announced

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department today announced force rotations for Iraq and Afghanistan, including upcoming active-duty deployments later this year and alerts to Army National Guard units to deploy in spring 2009 and 2010.

About 25,000 active-duty troops assigned to a division headquarters and seven brigade combat teams will begin to deploy to Iraq this fall, and continue through the year’s end, Bryan Whitman, deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, announced.

In addition, four Army National Guard brigades have been alerted of an upcoming deployment to Iraq, he said. About 14,000 affected soldiers are slated to begin deploying in spring 2009 to provide base defense and route security in Iraq and Kuwait.

In other news, the Vermont Army National Guard’s 86th Brigade Combat Team received an alert that it will deploy to Afghanistan in the spring of 2010 to support Afghan national security forces training.

All identified units will replace redeploying units, with no change in force strength, Whitman said. He emphasized, however, that longer-range

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Government Officials, Coalition Forces Work to Heal

PATROL BASE KEMPLE — For the first time in recent history, the government of Iraq came to the aid of local residents requiring medical care in al-Betra and Owesat, about 25 kilometers southwest of Baghdad, on May 20.

Assisted by Soldiers of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), GoI officials and Iraqi doctors flew to a school in the remote community of al-Betra to provide medical care and discuss the extension of govern-

ment services to the area.

The adjoining communities of al-Betra and Owesat sit on the western shores of the Euphrates River. The area falls under the jurisdiction of Anbar province and Ameriyah-Fallujah Nahia, despite being more than 30 kilometers from the nahia government and more than 40 kilometers from Fallujah, the seat of provincial government.

This natural isolation has led to a lack of essential services. In recent months,

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Dr. (Maj.) Angela Uy examines a child during the medical-care portion of a mission in al-Betra on May 20. U.S. Army photo.